U.S. Slaps Egypt on Human Rights Record and Ties to North Korea

**BY DECLAN WALSH**

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Tuesday denied Egypt $96 million in aid and delayed $195 million in military funding, in a move that analysts said was in response to President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s human rights record and Egypt’s backing of North Korea.

"Just as our strategic interests in any case are not the only factor, it is very much relevant to the funding that is provided for these programs," Mr. Sisi had said in April in the Oval Office.

The administration approved the new law on Tuesday, which was signed into law by Mr. Sisi in late August, the State Department confirmed.

While Mr. Sisi has been on the offensive in the past three years, the secrecy surrounding the law has stoked concerns over Egypt’s human rights record and its relationship with North Korea.

One of Egypt’s richest men, Naguib Sawiris, owns Orascom Telecom Media and Technology, the telecommunications company that helped set up North Korea’s main cellular telephone network in 2008.

"We are very much behind President el-Sisi," Mr. Trump said. "I just want to let everybody know, in case there was any doubt, that we are very much behind President el-Sisi," Mr. Trump said.

"We believe in him, we believe in Egypt, we believe in the people of Egypt. The United States has, and always will have, the people of Egypt. We believe in our backing, and we have strong backing."